

WWI Global Forces Chapter 2 Underlying Causes of World War 1

- 1) Unification of Germany and Italy - upset the traditional balance of power in Europe creating competition for Great Britain and threatening the power of France.
- 2) Nationalism: The borders of eastern European Empires and the Balkans bare absolutely no relation to the ethnic minorities of the region.
 - A) France - Very anti-German, anti-Semitic –worried about becoming a second class power. (Semitic means Jewish)
 - B) Britain - Anti-Semitic overtones, in competition with Germany, the nation is feeling powerful and somewhat smug.
 - C) Russia - Major domestic problems. Lack of a modern nationalist feeling and a lack of an industrial base plague the nation.
 - D) Germany - Rapid military/ economic growth. The nation is becoming increasingly aggressive world wide to gain colonies which = raw materials and markets and to gain prestige.
 - E) Austria-Hungary - Last gasp of a 17th Century empire. Putting out national fires in every part of the kingdom
 - F) Italy - growing economic importance - Visions of Romanesque Empire.

- 3) Imperialism: Necessity of colonies for markets and raw materials.

Clashes:

Fashoda Incident (GB F)
Moroccan Crisis (G-F) } Best example of BRINKMANSHIP
Balkans (Russia/Ottoman Empire A/H)

- 4) Arms Race: Predominantly between Britain and Germany but all nations involved. Phenomenal spending spree on heavy guns, dreadnoughts, and infantry supplies; new technologies making their appearance.
- 5) Economic Rivalries - Very intense between the newly industrialized nations. Germany pulls ahead in some areas like iron, and chemical production. German infrastructure is excellent. Education, especially in Germany, becomes important. Science, maths and social sciences are added to the curriculum. After the war there is a huge growth in the above areas (maths science...) will lead to things in future like the Atom Bomb, Space Race etc.

Infrastructure is all the highways, etc. parts of what makes the country works.
(Bismarck)

- 6) System of Alliances - Secret and /or interlocking treaties began to web European powers into a greater likelihood that a "continental" war would occur: Triple Alliance vs. Triple Entente.
- 7) Leadership - often arrogant, short-sighted and made ill considered choices. Big treaties gave moral support to the smaller countries, this enable the leaders of smaller nations to engage in risky foreign adventures which destabilized peace.
- 8) Weak Empires - The Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire is close to collapse. This will leave a power vacuum in areas which are strategically important.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT W.W. 1?

- 1) Total War - Military and non-military targets are important. Civilians were killed intentionally; they make up 10% of total war dead.
- 2) Industrial War - The capacity to wage war is affected by the ability of the nation to provide industrial goods.
- 3) Atrocities and Anti-Personnel Weaponry - use of poison gas and other anti-personnel weapons were designed to maim and not necessarily kill. (War was fought in the trenches)

Germany was the first to use MUSTARD GAS. The gas would burn the body lining. One would cough up their lungs. This was also used for visual attack and to hurt the moral of the soldiers.

70,000 dead but 3 times as many injured. Loss of limbs, mental problems caused financial drain on a nation as well as damaged moral. No penicillin at this time so any small cut that got dirty could pose great problems.

- 4) Open warfare – War was not restricted to a battle front; war often carried to colonies and to the open sea. (Merchant Marine)
- 5) Size of Armies - Millions of solders were drafted, poorly trained, and killed. 65,000,000 men served: *war of attrition*.
- 6) Battle Tactics - poorly trained Generals unaccustomed to the effect of modern weaponry fought a 20th Century war with 19th Century tactics. Generals were often indifferent to the human needs of their armies.

Versailles Treaty

- ▶ Germany is forced to admit Responsibility – War Guilt Clause
- ▶ Reparations set at \$33 Billion (the Germans would put salt on the land so people could not grow food)
- ▶ Lost all colonies
- ▶ Armed Forces reduced to 100 000 – basically internal police force
- ▶ Rhineland demilitarized (no military production, includes anything that an army might use. Closed down most industries including factories that supplied toothpaste, sandwich bag.) Iron steel plants were allowed to operate because profits made could be used to repay debt.
- ▶ Polish Corridor, cuts country in two
- ▶ Germany is forbidden to unite with Austria
- ▶ Lost territory to Poland, Alsace-Lorraine.
- ▶ Kaiser was out of power many civilians out of jobs.
- ▶ Weimar Republic declared a Democracy. (Proportional system of representation is used which meant that if person receives 5% of the votes than they would get 5 seats in the Government making the government overly democratic.

Other WWI Treaties

- ☑ Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (Germany and Russia)
- ☑ Treaty of Trianon (Allies with Hungary)
- ☑ Treaty of St. Germain (Allies with Austria)

CONSEQUENCES OF REPARATIONS

- ☑ \$33 billion was a staggering amount
- ☑ The gov't of Germany, the Weimar Republic, found it necessary to impose stiff taxation levels.
- ☑ The population refused to pay. It became "patriotic" not to pay tax.
- ☑ As debts and interest mounted, the pressure on Germany to pay increased. Overly democratic, the gov't seemed unable to get the economy moving again. The result was a huge increase in the paper money supply. However as the supply increased, the money lost value and by 1924 led to a devastating round of hyperinflation.

Hyperinflation: A very high increase in prices over a period of time, usually caused by excessive printing of money by a government to finance its spending.